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P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909  
Phone: (517) 335-0471

# The Assist<sup>TM</sup>

*Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum*

June 2005

Volume 4, No. 4

## Looking Forward to Fall 2005

Dear Readers,

Congratulations! Our fourth year of administering MI-Access statewide was a success. I want to thank all of you who participated in the process either by administering assessments and/or by facilitating the dissemination and return of assessment materials. We couldn't do it without all of you!

Each year we conduct a short survey to gather input from the field on the administration process. The survey will be open until June 30, so if you haven't shared your thoughts with us, it is not too late. To complete the survey, go to [www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access) and scroll down to "Survey Information." Your input is critical as we begin preparing for the next administration of MI-Access in fall 2005.

This issue of *The Assist*—the last before schools recess for summer break—is filled with important and timely information. As explained in the "Notes from the Contractor to MI-Access Coordinators" article on page 2, Winter 2005 MI-Access results are being shipped during the first week of June to districts across the state. (This year, state results will be available only on line.) District MI-Access Coordinators need to

pass relevant reports along to School MI-Access Coordinators who, in turn, will pass them along to assessment administrators. In addition to the reports, all coordinators and assessment administrators should receive a copy of the *Winter 2005 Handbook: How to Understand, Interpret, and Use MI-Access Results*. This year the handbook will be shipped in a separate shipment following the receipt of the reports. However, it will be available prior to shipment on the MI-Access Web page and the MI-Access Information Center. If you do not receive reports and/or the print version of the handbook, be sure to contact your School or District MI-Access Coordinator for assistance.

As we prepare for fall, be sure to review the article titled "Navigating the Pre-Identification Process for Fall 2005" on page 5. It includes important information for district coordinators on how to Pre-ID students this spring and summer for the fast-approaching fall administration of MEAP and MI-Access (for students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 9 MEAP only). A blended process—using both the OEAA

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## NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR TO MI-ACCESS COORDINATORS

Thank you again for your participation in Winter 2005 MI-Access. The answer documents have been scanned and scored, and districts will receive MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, and Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE results in June.

Results materials will arrive in three installments: District, school, and classroom results will be shipped first, handbooks will be shipped second, and state results will be posted on the Web in late June. (There will be no hard copies of state results this year.) To access state results, go to either the MI-Access Web page ([www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)) or the MI-Access Information Center ([www.mi-access.info](http://www.mi-access.info)).

Following is a list of the materials you will receive and an indication of which ones should be distributed to others.

District MI-Access Coordinators will receive

- a District Results Inventory,
- one or more district results folders,
- school and classroom results folders (for distribution), and

- handbooks (one to keep and others for distribution).

School MI-Access Coordinators will receive

- school results folders,
- classroom results folders (for distribution), and
- handbooks (one to keep and others for distribution).

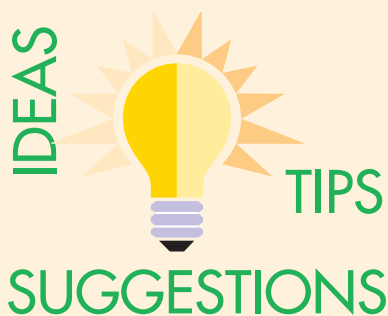
#### Handbooks

Winter 2005 handbooks will be supplied according to the number of assessment administrators entered in the MI-Access Online System last fall. It also will be available for download at the MI-Access Web page ([www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)) and MI-Access Information Center ([www.mi-access.info](http://www.mi-access.info)).

#### State Results

Because extra time was required to process online student demographic updates and district tested rosters—which are needed to help ensure that student data are accurate for No Child Left Behind reporting purposes—state results will be available after district,

*continued on page 4*



If you have ideas, suggestions, or tips you would like to see included in *The Assist*, send them to [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com).

## Looking Forward to Fall 2005

*continued from page 1*

Secure System (formerly referred to as the MEAP Secure Site) and the MI-Access Online System—will be used to input information for students taking MI-Access. The article explains when to use each system and for what.

This issue of *The Assist* also contains valuable information on the fall OEAA conferences (mark your calendars now!), the new Michigan Merit Exam, the new MEAP and MI-Access adminis-

tration contractor, issues related to No Child Left Behind, and much more. So, read it and enjoy as you close out this school year and prepare for the next. I hope you have a warm and wonderful summer break and find a little time for much deserved rest and relaxation. We'll see you next fall.

Peggy Dutcher

Coordinator, Assessment for

Students with Disabilities Program  
[dutcherp@mi.gov](mailto:dutcherp@mi.gov)

# Planning Under Way for the Michigan Merit Examination

The Michigan Merit Examination (MME), which was signed into law in January 2005, will change the nature of the assessment given to high school students in the future. Although the MME is not scheduled for implementation until spring 2007 and then only with approval from the U.S. Education Department (USED), planning for the transition is already well under way. The switch in high school testing will have implications for all high school students, especially students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

The current Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) high school test (HST) will continue to be administered during the 2005/2006 school year and until the USED approves the switch to the MME. That means that during the next school year, students in grades 10, 11, and 12 will take the MEAP HST for dual enrollment and Michigan Merit Award eligibility purposes, as well as to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which requires that students be assessed once in high school. (In Michigan, that means grade 11.)

To facilitate the transition to the MME, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) will put the program out for competitive bid this spring to select a vendor (either the ACT or the College Board), and begin working with the selected vendor to establish assessment schedules, develop awareness and training materials, and prepare for the content and statistical studies needed to obtain USED approval.

The schedule for implementing the MME is as follows.

## 2005/2006

- The MEAP HST will be the primary assessment given to students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

- A small number of students in grade 11 will participate in a statistical sample using the selected college entrance test.

## 2006/2007

- College entrance readiness tests will be used for dual enrollment eligibility purposes by students in grade 10.
- With federal approval, the college entrance test-based MME will be the primary assessment given to grade 11 students in spring 2007. If federal approval is not forthcoming, the current MEAP HST will continue to be administered.

- Students in grade 12 can choose to participate in the MME or the MEAP HST.

## 2007/2008

- With federal approval, the college entrance test-based MME will be the primary assessment given to grade 11 students in spring 2008. If federal approval is not forthcoming, the current MEAP HST will continue to be administered.
- Students in grade 12 can choose to retest once in the MME at the state's expense.

Each year, the primary grade 11 spring administration of the MME will take place during a common two-day school period in March, with one school day dedicated to the college entrance portion of the exam and the next school day dedicated to the Michigan-developed components of the exam (which include additional test items in ELA and mathematics and assessments in the content areas of science and social studies). A second make-up period will be offered on two school days exactly two weeks after the primary MME administration for students who were absent.

MME retests—for those students who already took the MME once and want to take it again—will take place in the fall. The college entrance portion of the exam will be administered only on a nationally-scheduled Saturday test day. The Michigan-developed components of the MME will then be administered on the following Tuesday. The state will pay for one retest for each student. It should be noted that both ACT and the College Board offer a fee waiver program for low income students.

All components of the MME—regardless of when they are administered—will be administered in exactly the same rigorous manner.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams will need to determine how students with disabilities will participate in both the MEAP HST and the MME. To help with that decision, the OEAA staff plans to prepare explanatory materials. In addition, IEP Teams will need to discuss appropriate assessment accommodations for these two tests. Teams must keep in mind, however, that each college entrance testing organization requires individual approval of the accommodations used by students with disabilities. To that end, schools will name both a testing coordinator and an accommodations coordinator, the latter of which will help IEP Teams with obtaining approval for needed accommodations. The accommodations that are approved by the college entrance testing organization will result in college entrance test scores reportable to a university; a broader set of accommodations will be available to schools, but the scores from students who use these broader, unapproved accommodations will not be reportable to universities.

Look for more information about the MME in future issues of *The Assist*.

## NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR

*continued from page 2*

# Fall OEAA Conferences to Include All State Assessment and Accountability Programs

In the past, Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and MI-Access conferences have always been handled separately. This year, however, both programs—as well as the English Language Arts Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) for English Language Learners and the Accountability and Accreditation Program—will hold joint two-day conferences around the state. The first day of each conference will be dedicated primarily to MEAP, ELPA, and accountability issues, with the second day focusing predominantly on issues related to state assessment for students with disabilities (MEAP, MI-Access, and ELPA).

The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) combined the conferences because (1) there are many overlapping issues that affect all programs and participants, and (2) there are a fair number of MEAP Coordinators who are also MI-Access Coordinators (about 25

percent) who, previously, had to divide their participation. Now, people with dual roles will be able to cover both programs at one conference in the same location. The OEAA is allowing participants to sign up either for both days or only one day of the conference, depending on their interests. Below is a tentative conference schedule.

The OEAA is in the process of conducting an online survey to determine what topics should be covered during the two-day conferences. If you have not yet provided input, go to [www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access), scroll down to "Survey Information," and click on "Annual OEAA Fall 2005 Conferences." The survey is open until June 15, 2005. The feedback from the survey will be reviewed by the OEAA staff, and used to identify appropriate speakers and develop break out sessions of interest to a wide range of participants.

school, and classroom reports are mailed. They will be posted on the MI-Access Web page ([www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)) and at the MI-Access Information Center ([www.mi-access.info](http://www.mi-access.info)). You will need to share state data with School MI-Access Coordinators and assessment administrators once they become available.

### Data CDs

For Winter 2005 MI-Access, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) and BETA/TASA, the MI-Access contractor, planned to provide student data to districts through the secure MI-Access Online System. However, because the MEAP and MI-Access contractors are in the process of transitioning to a new site for 2005/2006, it was determined that Winter 2005 data could be provided more efficiently and effectively on CDs (as in past years). Therefore, if your district is interested in obtaining student data for research and school improvement purposes, the District MI-Access Coordinator may request a data CD through the MI-Access Online System from June 9 through September 23, 2005, using the districts' secure link and password. (If you have misplaced your link or password, please call the Toll-free MI-Access Hotline at 1-888-382-4246 or send an e-mail message to [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com).) You will receive an e-mail message indicating that your district's data are available.

### Fall 2005

The next administration of the grades 3–8 MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence assessments (which replaces Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE) will begin in fall 2005. The window starts on September 28 and extends through November 8, 2005. Because the assessments have been moved from winter to fall, district coordinators will need to update their district and school coordinator information and enter projected student and teacher counts prior to the 2005/2006 school year. More information will be forthcoming via e-mail.

2005 Dates	Locations
October 26 & 27	Marquette
October 27 & 28	Gaylord
November 1 & 2	Livonia
November 7 & 8	Sterling Heights
November 9 & 10	Grand Rapids
November 14 & 15	Lansing



# Navigating the Pre-Identification Process for Fall 2005

In 2005/2006, the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and MI-Access assessments for students in grades 3 through 8 (and grade 9 MEAP only) will be administered in the fall. That means that MEAP and MI-Access District Coordinators need to begin the pre-identification process now.

## Options for Pre-Identifying Students

In April 2005, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction Jeremy Hughes sent a memorandum to Local Education Agency (LEA) and Intermediate School District (ISD) Superintendents and Public School Academy Directors and Authorizers (1) outlining several Pre-ID options that districts could use, and (2) asking them to indicate which option would work best for them. Following is a description of the options from the April 6th memorandum.

- **Option A:** Districts assign their students to new grades or buildings for fall 2005 by loading a district data file of Pre-ID data into the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) Secure System (formerly the MEAP Secure System). The file format can be found on the login page of the secure website at [www.michigan.gov/meap-secure](http://www.michigan.gov/meap-secure) and will need to be uploaded by July 29, 2005. (This option is recommended for large, complex districts and/or those that have the technical capabilities to complete such a process.)
- **Option B:** From April 6th through July 29th, districts may access spring 2005 Single Record Student Database (SRSD) data using enhanced features available on the OEAA Secure System to move students to their expected schools and grade levels for fall 2005. The



instructions for the SRSD copy function can be located on the login page of the OEAA secure website at [www.michigan.gov/meap-secure](http://www.michigan.gov/meap-secure) by clicking on the "Enhancement How-To Help Documents." (This option is recommended for smaller, less complex districts.)

- **Option C:** On May 13th, the state loaded student Pre-ID information from the spring 2005 SRSD using the information specified in the Projected Destination School Report (PDSR) that was included in the initial letter to superintendents. The PDSR was based on a comparison of the district's end-of-year 2004 and fall 2004 SRSD submissions. Once the students are loaded, districts can continue to use the enhanced application tools to move, add, and unassign students, as needed, until July 29th. (This option was made available only to smaller districts and recommended for those (1) that had not recently opened or closed schools, and/or (2) whose assignment patterns were not being changed. This option does not apply to MI-Access.)

The Pre-ID data entered into the OEAA Secure System through these options will be used next fall to preprint answer documents with each student's name and Unique Identification Code (UIC), and to develop preprinted barcodes with other student demographic information (such as age, grade, gender,

and so forth).

## Students Enrolled After July 29th

If new students are enrolled in a district after July 29th and districts enter their demographic information in the OEAA Secure System before September 19th, the assessment administration contractor will ship labels to schools for these newly identified students. The labels for these students may be placed in the Pre-ID area on the blank answer documents supplied by the contractor or placed over the top of preprinted answer documents originally assigned to students who no longer attend that school.

If a new student is enrolled in the district after July 29th but their demographic information is not entered into the OEAA Secure System by September 19th, districts will need to print labels themselves from the OEAA Secure System for their new students (that is, at that late date, the contractor will not be able to prepare and ship labels prior to assessment administration).

## Students Taking MI-Access

The Pre-ID process will work a little differently for students with disabilities who are taking MI-Access, because both the OEAA Secure System and the MI-Access Online System will be used. The OEAA Secure System will be used to assign students to the MI-Access test cycle and add new students, along with their demographic information, who will be taking MI-Access in the fall. The MI-Access Online System will be used to indicate which specific MI-Access assessment a student will take—MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, or Functional Independence which, starting in fall 2005, will take the place of Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE. (See page 6 for a schedule.) *continued on page 6*

# Team Formed to Review and Revise State Assessment Guidelines

On March 9, 2005, education stakeholders from around the state met to review the *Draft Guidelines for Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities* and develop "Guidelines for Participation in State Assessment" for all students, including Special Education, Section 504, and English Language Learners. The group's charge at its first two meetings was to address the issue of assessment accommodations, which included (1) reviewing the state's current list of standard and nonstandard assessment accommoda-

tions, (2) determining whether additional accommodations should be added to the list, and (3) beginning the process of indicating which accommodations should be "standard" for the state's various assessments, including the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), MI-Access, and the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) for English Language Learners. The goal of this work is to develop a combined list of all standard and non-standard assessment accommodations



for all state-level assessments (as well as the National Assessment of Educational Progress) and for all students. It will be taken to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval at its June Board meeting. The entire revised guidelines document will also go to the SBE for approval, but not until fall 2005.

The resulting assessment accommodation chart, which will appear in the chapter on accommodations in the larger guidelines document, is not intended to be a checklist for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams to use only when making assessment decisions. Instead it is intended to identify whether an assessment accom-



modation is standard, and can be used during instruction to help students of varying abilities access, and make progress in, the general curriculum. If the accommodations

are effective for the student during instruction, they then can be used to help that student access the state's assessments and better show what he or she knows and is able to do.

The group met for a second time in April to continue its work on the accommodations chart. Look for updates on the group's progress in future issues of *The Assist*.

## Navigating the Pre-Identification Process for Fall 2005

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### Pre-Identifying Students

#### Pre-Identifying Known Students

Early April – May 27th	In the OEAA Secure System, assign students to the MI-Access test cycle and add new students, along with their demographic information, for fall 2005.
June 1st – June 10th	In the MI-Access Online System, indicate which MI-Access assessment each student will take in fall 2005.

#### Pre-Identifying Additional Students

June 13th – July 29th	In the OEAA Secure System, enter additional student names, demographic information, and assign the students to the MI-Access test cycle for fall 2005.
July 29th – September 19th	In the OEAA Secure System, enter additional student names, demographic information, and assign the students to the MI-Access test cycle for fall 2005. Students pre-identified during this period will receive pre-ID labels instead of pre-printed student answer documents.
August 1st – to be determined	In the MI-Access Online System, indicate which MI-Access assessment each additional student will take in fall 2005.

### Questions

If you have questions related to the Pre-ID process on the OEAA Secure System, you may call the OEAA's Toll-free number at 1-877-560-8378 (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or send an e-mail message to [OEAA@michigan.gov](mailto:OEAA@michigan.gov). For questions related specifically to pre-identifying MI-Access students, call the MI-Access Toll-free Hotline at 1-888-382-

4246 or send an e-mail message to [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com).

The OEAA held a video conference on April 13th to (1) demonstrate enhancements to the OEAA Secure System, and (2) provide detailed information on how the Pre-ID process will work. If you missed the video conference, you may view it online at [www.MIStreamnet.com](http://www.MIStreamnet.com).

## CHANGE IN FALL 2005 MI-ACCESS ASSESSMENT WINDOW

Please note that there has been a change in the Fall 2005 MI-Access assessment window for students in grades 3 through 8. The window was originally scheduled from October 3 - November 11, 2005, but it has now been moved to **September 28 - November 8, 2005**. The earlier dates will allow the OEAA to (1) hand score MI-Access Functional Independence Expressing Ideas prompt responses, and (2) have standard-setting panels meet to recommend standards for the MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence assessments.

Following are all the MEAP and MI-Access assessment dates for the 2005/2006 school year.

Season/Grades	MEAP	MI-Access
Fall Grades 3-8 (and grade 9 MEAP only)	October 3 – October 21	September 28 – November 8
Fall High School Retest	October 24 – November 4	Not applicable
Spring High School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle 1</li> <li>• Cycle 2</li> <li>• Cycle 3</li> </ul>	March 20 – March 31 March 27 – April 7 April 3 – April 14	February 27 – April 14 (Grade 11)

## A Correction and Clarification Regarding the Content Areas Assessed at Each Grade Level

In the April 2005 issue of *The Assist*, there was an omission in the table showing which content areas will be assessed starting in the 2005/2006 school year at each grade level. The "X" was inad-

vertently omitted from eleventh-grade social studies. The table below includes the "X" and should be used for all future discussions with Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams.

In addition, it should be noted that the ninth-grade MEAP social studies assessment will be administered in fall 2005, not in spring with the other high school assessments.

## Grades and Content Areas Assessed at the State Level

Content Areas	Grades							
	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	11th
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Science			X			X		X
Social Studies				X			X	X

**2003/2004**  
**State Board of Education**  
**Strategic Goal**

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Attain substantial and meaningful improvement in academic achievement for all students/children with primary emphasis on high priority schools and students.

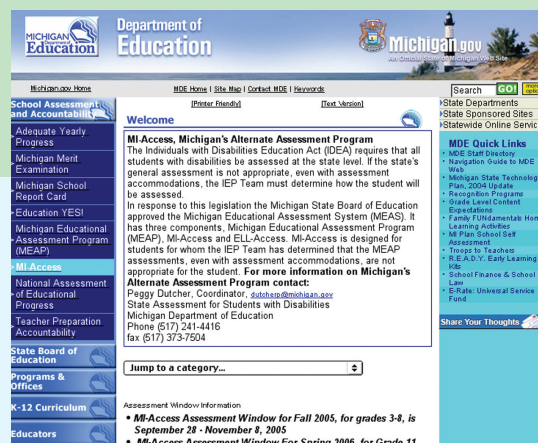
Revised at the October 23, 2003  
Board Meeting.

Attain substantial and meaningful improvement in academic achievement for all students/children with primary emphasis on high priority schools and students.

Revised at the October 23, 2003  
Board Meeting.

Check it out!

You will find more  
MI-Access information on  
the MI-Access Web page  
of the  
Michigan Department of  
Education Web site  
**[www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)**.



# Universal Education Moves Forward in Michigan

In June 2003, the State Board of Education (SBE) requested that the Superintendent of Public Instruction prepare a draft vision and set of principles related to universal education. To fulfill that request, the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) convened the Universal Education Referent Group (hereafter referred to as “the group”), which met over the course of six months during 2004 to complete their charge.

While the group was working, it received a number of requests from parents, teachers, and administrators to provide input on the vision and principles. Therefore, in early 2005, a draft report—titled “Vision and Principles of Universal Education”—was disseminated for field review. The official comment period ended April 30, 2005. The feedback is now being reviewed and will be incorporated as appropriate into a document that will go to the SBE for approval. (To download the draft report, go to [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde), type “universal education” in the search field, and scroll down to the report.)

While the term “universal education” may not be familiar to a wide range of people, the premise upon which it is based is well understood

in the special education community. It maintains, as the report states, that “every individual’s success is important to our society.” As a result, “each person deserves and needs a concerned, accepting educational community that values diversity and provides a comprehensive system of

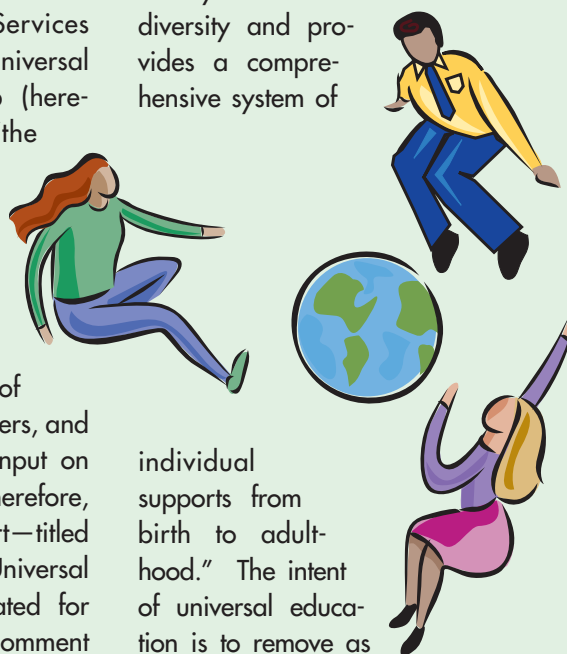
individual supports from birth to adulthood.” The intent of universal education is to remove as many barriers as possible and provide supports to facilitate learning for everyone.

The report also describes the “who, what, and how” of universal education and defines what is meant by terms like learning communities, environments, cultures, and resources. Furthermore, it identifies a variety of factors that affect today’s learners, such as emotional and mental health, homelessness, learning styles, physical health,

socioeconomic status, runaway status, physical health, and more.

Universal learning is somewhat akin to the universal design principles used to develop the MI-Access Functional Independence assessments. “Universally designed” assessments are based on the premise that every child deserves to participate in assessment, and that assessment results should not be affected by disability, gender, race, or English language ability. In addition, universally designed assessments aim to reduce the need for assessment accommodations by removing access barriers associated with the tests themselves. (National Center for Educational Outcomes, *Universal Design Applied to Large Scale Assessments, Synthesis Report 44.*) While designing the MI-Access assessments, the MDE and its Assessment Plan Writing Team used universal design principles to (1) ensure that the MI-Access Functional Independence assessments were accessible, and (2) were designed to meet the unique and varying needs of the student population being assessed while still being objective and valid.

Look for more information on universal education and the status of the report in upcoming issues of *The Assist*.





# U.S. Education Department to Issue New Rule on 1% Cap

*On May 10, 2005, U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings issued a "Key Policy Letter," explaining that, in the near future, the Department would issue a notice of proposed rulemaking that would allow qualifying states to, among other things, include proficient scores from a limited group of students with disabilities who take alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards (subject to a 2.0 percent cap at the district and state level) in their calculations of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Following is reprint of that letter. More information about the new policy and the No Child Left Behind Act is available at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).*

Dear Colleague:

I know you share the strong belief that no child should be left behind in our efforts to ensure that our nation's elementary and secondary schoolchildren receive an education that fully prepares them for college or the workforce. This is particularly true for students with disabilities who, in the past, have often been held to lower standards and assessed in ways that failed to accommodate their disabilities and demonstrate what they know. As a result, I support emphatically the requirements that are the cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—that *all* students, including students with disabilities, be held to challenging content and achievement standards; that their progress be measured annually by high-quality assessments aligned with those high standards; and that schools and school districts be held accountable for achieving results.

The vast majority of students can achieve—and we must expect them to achieve—to grade-level standards. Thus, we must hold schools and districts accountable for ensuring that they provide proper instruction for students to meet those standards. Research tells us that a very small percentage of students with disabilities, however, may not ever achieve grade-level proficiency, even with the very best instruction. That is why the Department issued regulations under Title I that permit states to hold

students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to alternate achievement standards and to include their proficient scores (subject to a 1.0 percent cap) in determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under Title I. These regulations are good practice and ensure that schools and districts receive credit for the work they are doing with these students. Without those regulations, a school and district would have little incentive to hold these students to any standards or devote adequate resources toward their instruction because their assessment scores would be considered not proficient. I most certainly want schools and districts to be held accountable for these students, as well as for all other students.

In addition to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, research now indicates that there is another group of students with disabilities who can make significant progress but may not reach grade-level achievement standards within the same time frame as other students. This research shows that, even after receiving the best-designed instructional interventions from highly trained instructors, a group of students with academic disabilities, comprising approximately two percent of the school-age population, is not able to achieve at grade level. They are able to make significant progress toward grade-level standards when provided high-quality instructional

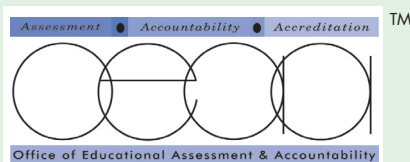
interventions and measured with appropriate assessment instruments.

As a result, the Department intends to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking in the near future that would permit states to (a) develop modified achievement standards for a limited group of students with disabilities, as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (b) develop alternate assessments (based on those modified achievement standards) that are aligned with grade-level content standards, and (c) include proficient scores from these assessments (subject to a 2.0 percent cap at the district and state level) in determining AYP. The goal of these regulations would be to ensure that states hold those students to challenging, though modified, achievement standards that enable them to approach, and even meet, grade-level standards; ensure these students access to the general curriculum; measure their progress with high-quality alternate assessments; provide guidance and training to Individualized Education Program Teams to identify these students properly; and provide professional development to regular and special education teachers regarding successful interventions.

In the interim, for the 2004/2005 AYP determinations only, as a matter of policy in holding states accountable under the law, I am permitting qualified states

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# OEAA Contract Goes to BETA and PEM Partners



The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) awarded the OEAA Administration Contract for all of its state-level assessments to Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM). PEM will be responsible for the administration of the MEAP, MI-Access, and the new English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), beginning with the administration of assessments to students in grades 3 through 8 (and grade 9 MEAP only) this coming fall.

In order to accomplish this tremendously large task, PEM has partnered with the current MI-Access contractor—Beck Evaluation and Testing Associates, Inc./Touchstone Applied Science Associates (BETA/TASA). BETA/TASA will be responsible for the administration of all activities and correspondence related to MI-Access.



OEAA/PEM/BETA/TASA staff meeting, April 2005, to coordinate administration tasks.

MI-Access assessment materials will also continue to be produced and shipped by BETA/TASA to District MI-Access Coordinators and returned there for scanning and scoring.



However, at this point, the plan is for PEM to produce and ship MI-Access reports back to District MI-Access Coordinators and post them in the common OEAA Secure System along with all other OEAA assessment results. (More information on reporting will be provided in future issues of *The Assist*.)

In April, the OEAA, BETA/TASA, and PEM met to schedule and coordinate all activities needed to prepare for and implement the fall

2005 MI-Access assessments (Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence) for grades 3 through 8. At that meeting, it was determined that a number of tasks—

such as the hand scoring of student responses to the Functional Independence Expressing Ideas prompts and academic achievement standard setting (cut score recommendations for the achievement categories of Surpassed, Attained, and Emerging)—would be handled collaboratively by BETA/TASA and PEM.

## U.S. Education Department to Issue New Rule on 1% Cap

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to exercise additional flexibility in making AYP determinations for the students with disabilities subgroup for the 2005/2006 school year, based on assessments administered to those students during the 2004/2005 school year. To qualify to exercise this flexibility this year, a state must be meeting specific core requirements of NCLB related to students with disabilities. The state must also provide information on actions it has taken to

raise achievement for all students with disabilities, as well as address the activities it has taken or will take to ensure that students who need to take a modified assessment are able to make significant progress toward reaching grade-level standards. In separate documents, we are providing you additional guidance regarding the process for requesting approval to amend your state accountability plan to incorporate this flexibility.

As I have said before, I absolutely believe this is the right approach for students. We have much work ahead of us to improve the instruction and assessment system for students with disabilities, and I look forward to working with you toward this end.

Sincerely,

Margaret Spellings

# Vince Dean Joins the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program

In May 2005, Vince Dean joined the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program (ASWDP) in the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) as an Assessment Consultant. In that capacity, he will use his considerable expertise in conducting psycho-educational assessments with children of all ages and his strengths as a collaborator with educators and parents to ensure that Michigan students with disabilities have full access to meaningful and appropriate state-level assessments.

For the past six years, Vince has worked with students with disabilities in a variety of positions, including as a School Psychologist with Holt Public Schools, a School Psychologist with the Montcalm Area Intermediate School District, and a school psychology intern with the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District.

While he was working, Vince also continued his education, earning a Specialist Degree in School Psychology from Central Michigan University and, most recently, a Doctor of Philosophy in K-12 Education Administration (with



*Vince Dean*

emphasis on Special Education) from Michigan State University. His work and study in so many different regions of Michigan gives Vince unique insight into the opportunities and challenges of developing and implementing statewide programs.

In addition, Vince brings both strong research and writing skills and a familiarity with MI-Access to his new position. He has published numerous articles on topics ranging from school violence prevention efforts and the role of curriculum-based assessments to learning disability diagnostic models and the changing role of school

psychology. He also served on the writing team that developed the MI-Access Functional Independence Assessment Plan, served on one of two MI-Access Content Advisory Committees, and helped develop the criteria the state used to determine which Functional Independence students were "proficient" when Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams were allowed to select from a variety of assessment options.

In talking about his decision to come to the OEAA, Vince said, "while serving on various MI-Access teams over the past three years, I have continually been impressed with the OEAA staff's vision of making the ASWDP a series of useful instruments for teachers to determine present levels of student functioning and inform instruction. I hope to contribute to this goal, which impacts all students with disabilities."

The ASWDP is extremely pleased to have Vince Dean join its team. His education and expertise will be of great value as the state continues its efforts to develop and implement high quality assessments for students with disabilities.

# GLOSSARY



**Pre-ID:** The process used to gather students' identifying information and embed it in barcodes and/or preprint it on student scan documents. The Pre-ID process, among other things, is intended to reduce the amount of time assessment administrators must spend bubbling in student information.

**MI-Access Online System:** The BETA/TASA password-protected Web site used to collect and store information for MI-Access assessment administration. The system—which can be accessed only by District MI-Access Coordinators using the district's individualized link and password—contains the most up-to-date information for coordinators and is used to order training materials, order assessment materials, enter estimated teacher and student counts, enter information for pre-identifying students, obtain shipping histories, provide secure downloadable student data, and access additional resources.

**OEAA Secure System:** Formerly referred to as the MEAP Secure Site, this password-protected online system is used, in part, to pre-identify and update demographic information on students participating in the state's assessment system. District MI-Access Coordinators collaborate with MEAP Coordinators to use this system when updating MI-Access student demographic information.

**Universal Education:** An approach to education that is founded on the belief that every individual's success is important to society. As a result, each person deserves and needs a concerned, accepting educational community that values diversity and provides a comprehensive system of individual supports from birth to adulthood. (*Vision and Principles of Universal Education.*)

# The Assist™

## Important MI-Access Dates

**MI-Access Winter 2005 Results**  
Shipped first week of June

**Tentative Fall OEAA Conference Dates**  
October 26 & 27 – Marquette  
October 27 & 28 – Gaylord  
November 1 & 2 – Livonia  
November 7 & 8 – Sterling Heights  
November 9 & 10 – Grand Rapids  
November 14 & 15 – Lansing

**MI-Access Fall 2005 Assessment Window**  
**Grades 3-8**  
September 28, 2005 – November 8, 2005

**MI-Access Spring 2006 Assessment Window**  
**Grade 11**  
February 27, 2006 – April 14, 2006

## Bookmark these Web Sites:

**[www.MIStreamnet.com](http://www.MIStreamnet.com)**  
View the April 13th video conference  
on the Pre-ID Process

**[www.nochildleftbehind.gov](http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov)**

**[www.mi.gov/oeaa](http://www.mi.gov/oeaa)**

**[www.mi.gov/meap](http://www.mi.gov/meap)**

**[www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)**

**[www.mi-access.info](http://www.mi-access.info)**



This newsletter related to the assessment of students with disabilities is distributed to local and intermediate superintendents, directors of special education, MI-Access Coordinators, MEAP Coordinators, SEAC, Special Education monitors, MDE staff, school principals, Parent Advisory Committees, and institutes of higher education. *The Assist* may also be downloaded from the MI-Access Web page at **[www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)**.